

Rewrite the paragraph starting at page 2, line 23 and ending at page 2, line 27 as

follows:

A2 ✓ inventory acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a number of units of a commodity in stock from storage means in which a number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to a group corresponding to the rank; and --

Rewrite the paragraph starting at page 3, line 17 and ending at page 3, line 21 as

follows:

A3 ✓ an inventory acquisition step of acquiring information concerning a number of units of a commodity in stock from storage means in which a number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to a group corresponding to the rank; and --

Rewrite the paragraph starting at page 4, line 12 and ending at page 4, line 16 as

follows:

A4 ✓ inventory acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a number of units of a commodity in stock from storage means in which a number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to a group corresponding to the rank; and --

Rewrite the paragraph starting at page 5, line 6 and ending at page 5, line 10 as

follows:

A5 ✓ inventory acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a number of units of a commodity in stock from storage means in which a number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to a group corresponding to the rank; and --

Rewrite the paragraph starting at page 12, line 6 and ending at page 12, line 16 as follows:

A6 Described next will be processing for deciding the allocation ratio of a number of units in stock in each group in the inventory management data set forth above. Fig. 7 is a flowchart illustrating the processing for deciding allocation ratio.

It is decided at step S1 in Fig. 7 whether update timing has arrived. By way of example, updating can be carried out every few weeks or every few months. If the timing for updating has arrived, control proceeds to step S2; otherwise, control proceeds to step S4 and other processing is executed. --.

Rewrite the paragraph starting at page 16, line 6 and ending at page 16, line 14 as follows:

A7 Step S28 calls for a determination as to whether the ordered volume of the commodity is greater than the number of units in the inventory of a group corresponding to a rank lower than that assigned to the orderer. The reason for this is to treat a high-ranked orderer preferentially and supply this orderer with the commodity in an amount above the quota of a group so that the commodity will reach this orderer to the greatest extent possible. --.

In the Abstract

Rewrite the paragraph starting at page 29, line 2 and ending at page 29, line 15 as follows:

A8 -- Order-acceptance management capable of supplying commodities to customers in accordance with the customers is executed. The apparatus assigns a rank to an orderer and